

Pointers For Parents

Recognizing Signs Of Learning Difficulties In Children

(NAPSA)—According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately one in seven people in America suffer from learning disabilities (LD). Sadly, every year, the school season can be a heartbreaking time for children who face significant difficulties because of LD (including those undiagnosed). Many of their struggles go beyond learning, such as low self-esteem and/or social isolation. Fortunately, a Web site has been created to help parents of children facing these issues deal with the fears and challenges that LD presents. The site, www.SchwabLearning.org, provides much-needed information on identification and treatment as well as a community of parents who have also faced the emotional challenges of LD.

While about 15 percent of the U.S. population has some type of LD, many go unaddressed due to lack of identification. Moreover, in a recent poll, 44 percent of parents who noticed their child exhibiting signs of difficulty with learning waited a year or more before acknowledging their child might have a serious problem.

Early Signs of LD

“Parents should look for early signs of LD as soon as their children begin school, if not sooner, and by all means act on their gut instincts and seek professional



Difficulty in learning simple songs and nursery rhymes can be early signs of learning disability.

diagnosis,” said Marshall Raskind, Ph.D., Director of Research and Special Projects at Schwab Learning. “Studies have shown that there is a greater likelihood of improving the difficulties associated with learning disabilities like dyslexia when they are detected at an early age.”

Reading difficulties are just one particular area of LD that often becomes evident early on in a child’s life. Some are detected even before children start preschool. Some of the early signs of reading problems include:

- Difficulty learning simple songs and nursery rhymes
- Inability to recognize letters in his or her own name
- Trouble remembering numbers and letters, or days of the week
- Often mispronounces words

- Disinterest in games that have to do with language

Later Signs of LD

Once a child has been exposed to the fundamentals of learning in kindergarten, parents may observe even more signs of learning disabilities, such as:

- Difficulty pronouncing words or frequent reversal or substitution of parts of words
- Difficulty carrying out a sequence of directions
- Difficulty hearing fine differences in words; e.g., writes “pin” for “pen”
- Difficulty recognizing words previously learned
- Poor reading comprehension

“By seeking out information and help, parents will significantly increase the chances that their children will overcome their challenges and become successful in learning and in life,” stated Dr. Raskind.

Additional information about learning disabilities is available at SchwabLearning.org. The site also offers practical strategies parents can use to help their children and to work effectively with schools and teachers.

Schwab Learning is a nonprofit program of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation dedicated to helping kids with learning and attention problems be successful in school and life.